

10 Safety Tips For All New Parents, Caregivers, And Others Who Travel By Vehicle With Children

1 Rear-Facing as Long as Possible (until at least age 2)

Surprised? Wondering about the legs? It is safe, comfortable and most children will sit crossed-legged. Yes, some car seats can accommodate most children until at least 3 years old rear-facing.

2 The Safest Car Seat for Your Family?

The car seat that is **Easy** for **All Caregivers** to use;
The car seat that **Fits** your **Vehicle**;
The car seat the **Fits** your child's **Height & Weight**.

Always check the labels on your car seat and the instructions to your car seat.

3 Categories of Car Seats

Rear-Facing Car Seat*: Protection is at its highest as it supports the head, neck and spine. Provides proper recline angle when installed properly

(Types: Infant Car Seat, Convertible Seat, All-in-One Seat). *You may find yourself buying two types to maintain rear-facing position to a minimum of age 2.

Forward-Facing: Has a harness and tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash (Types: Convertible Seat, Combination Seat, All-in-One Seat).

Booster Seat: Positions the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body (Types: High Back Booster Seat, Backless Booster Seat, Combination Seat, All-in-One Seat).

Reminder Not All Car Seats Fit All Vehicles.

4 The Five-Stage Journey of Car Seat Safety

Stage 1: Rear Facing - Washington State Law; RCW 46.61.687: Children up to age 2 must ride in a rear facing seat

Stage 2: Forward Facing

Stage 3: Booster

Stage 4: Seat Belt

Stage 5: Front Seat - Washington State Law; RCW 46.61.687: Children up to age 13 must ride in the back seat when practical.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children remain in each stage of protection for as long as possible. Each transition reduces the protection of the child. Please refer to healthychildren.org or nhtsa.org for age parameters of the stages.

5 Harness Fit

- **NEVER** use clothing or blankets that interfere with fastening or tightening of the harness - **remove** bulk.

- Child sits tall, their bottom is back against the seat. **No slouching**.

- Harness is at or below shoulders & in appropriate loops/slots per instruction manual.

- Harness Straps must be laying flat & free of twists. Use the pinch test for snugness of straps at the shoulders and hips. Refer to manual.

- Chest Clip is at the armpit level of child.

6 ALWAYS Read the Manuals.

Be sure to read your car seat and vehicle manuals **prior** to doing any installation.

7 ALWAYS Follow the Instructions and Recline Guide.

Refer to your manual for guidance.

8 General Installation Tips (safekids.org)

Two ways to secure a car seat in a vehicle:

- **One way** is to use the vehicle seat belt. Place the seat belt through the car seat at the belt path. Arrows on the car seat or directions on the car seat label will show you the correct belt path to use.

- **Another way** is to use lower anchors (LATCH) to install the car seat to the vehicle. Car seats have lower attachments that connect to the vehicle's lower anchors. Refer to instruction manual for when or if you use a tether. *Use LATCH only for children less than a certain weight (**refer to manuals**).

Secure tightly in the vehicle. Give a non-dominate handshake at the belt path area (pull only side to side and forward). Car seat should not move more than 1" (25 mm) from vehicle seat back or side-to-side.

9 DO NOT use any Accessories, Pads or Products not Included with Your Car Seat

10 Visit Reputable Websites for Help

- Car seat manufactures' website & videos
- wacarseats.com
- safecar.gov
- ultimatecarseatguide.org
- safekids.org
- healthychildren.org
- nhtsa.gov

